

From Day to Day
with the Brownings





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ROBERT BROWNING

From Day to Day
With the
Brownings

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FROM DAY TO DAY WITH THE BROWINGS

JANUARY

JANUARY FIRST

What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work
assoil.

God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pale crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave
cheer,

And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower with a brimming cup may
stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near.
Work.

JANUARY SECOND

Oh, make us happy and you make us good.
The Ring and the Book.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JANUARY THIRD

Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.

Pippa Passes.

JANUARY FOURTH

I thought how once Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for
years,

Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,

I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was
'ware,

So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the
hair;

And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
“Guess now who holds thee?”—“Death,” I
said. But, there,

The silver answer rang,—“Not Death, but
Love.”—*Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

JANUARY FIFTH

Love is so different with us men.

In a Year.

WITH THE BROWNING



JANUARY SIXTH

We mortals cross the ocean of this world
Each in his average cabin of a life—
The best's not big, the worst yields elbow-room.
Now for our six months' voyage—how prepare?
Bishop Blougram's Apology.

JANUARY SEVENTH

Progress is
The Law of life—man is not Man as yet.
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness, here and there a towering mind
O'erlooks its prostrate fellows: when the host
Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers—then, not till then,
I say, begins man's general infancy.
Paracelsus.

JANUARY EIGHTH

I find earth not gray but rosy,
Heaven not grim but fair of hue.
At the "Mermaid."

FROM DAY TO DAY



JANUARY NINTH

When a man's busy, why, leisure
Strikes him as wonderful pleasure;
'Faith, and at leisure once is he?
Straightway he wants to be busy.
The Glove.

JANUARY TENTH

Love, if you knew the light
That your soul casts in my sight,
How I look to you
For the pure and true,
And the beauteous and the right.
A Lover's Quarrel.

JANUARY ELEVENTH

Men are not angels, neither are they brutes:
Something we may see, all we cannot see.
Bishop Blougram's Apology.

JANUARY TWELFTH

The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means—a very different thing!
Bishop Blougram's Apology.

WITH THE BROWNING



JANUARY THIRTEENTH

What does Man see or feel or apprehend
Here, there, and everywhere, but faults to mend,
Omissions to supply,—one wide disease
Of things that are, which man at once would
ease,

Had will but power and knowledge?

Francis Furini.

JANUARY FOURTEENTH

Duty be mine to tread in that high sphere
Where love from duty ne'er disparts, I trust,
And two halves make that whole, whereof—
since here

One must suffice a man—why, this one must!

Bifurcation.

JANUARY FIFTEENTH

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby sworn ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which **for** once had play unstifled,
Seems the whole work of a lifetime,
That away the rest have trifled.

Christina.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JANUARY SIXTEENTH

In every man's career are certain points
Whereon he dare not be indifferent;
The world detects him clearly, if he is,
As baffled at the game, and losing life.

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

JANUARY SEVENTEENTH

You have seen better days, dear? So have I—
And worse too, for they brought no such bud-
mouth
As yours to lisp "You wish you knew me!"
Well,
Wise men, 'tis said, have sometimes wished the
same,
And wished and had their trouble for their
pains.

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.

JANUARY EIGHTEENTH

If we had but faith—wherein we fail—
Whate'er we yearn for would be granted us;
Howbeit we let our whims prescribe despair,
Our very fancies thwart and cramp our will,
And so accepting life abjure ourselves!

In a Balcony.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



JANUARY NINETEENTH

Loving! what claim to love has work of mine?

Concede my life were emptied of its gains

To furnish forth and fill work's strict confine,

Who works so for the world's sake—he complains

With cause when hate, not love, rewards his pains.

I looked beyond the world for truth and beauty:

Sought, found, and did my duty.

Ferishtah's Fancies.

JANUARY TWENTIETH

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand

Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand

The beating of my heart to reach its place.

When shall I look for thee and find thee gone?

When cry for the old comfort and find none?

Never, I know! Thy soul is in thy face.

Any Wife to Any Husband.

JANUARY TWENTY-FIRST

The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life;

Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate!

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JANUARY TWENTY-SECOND

I worked with patience which means almost
power:

I did some excellent things indifferently,
Some bad things excellently. Both were praised,
The latter loudest. —*Aurora Leigh*.

JANUARY TWENTY-THIRD

All actual heroes are essential men,
And all men possible heroes.—*Aurora Leigh*.

JANUARY TWENTY-FOURTH

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs
furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn
above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I
love it. —*My Star*.

WITH THE BROWINGS



JANUARY TWENTY-FIFTH

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.

A Grammarian's Funeral.

JANUARY TWENTY-SIXTH

What so wild as words are?
A Woman's Last Word.

JANUARY TWENTY-SEVENTH

Who hears music, feels his solitude
Peopled at once.
Balaustion's Adventure.

JANUARY TWENTY-EIGHTH

As well affirm that your eye is no longer in
your body, because its earliest favorite, what-
ever it may have first loved to look on, is dead
and done with—as that any affection is lost to
the soul when its first object, whatever happened
first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course.
Pippa Passes.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JANUARY TWENTY-NINTH

What's the earth
With all its art, verse, music, worth—
Compared with love, found, gained, and kept?
Dis aliter Visum.

JANUARY THIRTIETH

Wish no word unspoken, want no look away!
What if words were but mistake, and looks—
too sudden, say!
Be unjust for once, Love! Bear it, well I may!

Do me justice always? bid my heart—their
shrine—
Render back its store of gifts, old looks and
words of thine
—Oh, so all unjust—the less deserved, the more
divine?

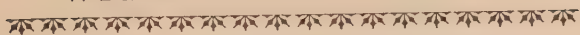
Ferishtah's Fancies.

JANUARY THIRTY-FIRST

Religion's all or nothing; it's no mere simile
O' contentment, sigh of aspiration, sir—
No quality o' the finelier-tempered clay
Like its whiteness or its lightness; rather stuff
O' the very stuff, life of life, and self of self.

Mr. Sludge the Medium.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY FIRST

God be with thee, my belovéd,—God be with
thee!

Else alone thou goest forth,
Thy face unto the north,
Moor and pleasance all around thee and be-
neath thee

Looking equal in one snow;
While I, who try to reach thee,
Vainly follow, vainly follow
With the farewell and the hollo,
And cannot reach thee so.

Alas, I can but teach thee!
God be with thee, my belovéd,—God be with
thee! —*A Valediction.*

FEBRUARY SECOND

Eyes shall meet eyes and find no eyes between,
Lips feed on lips, no other lips to fear!
No past, no future—so thine arms but screen
The present from surprise! not there, 'tis
here—

Not then, 'tis now:—back, memories that in-
trude!

Make, Love, the universe our solitude,
And, over all the rest, oblivion roll—
Sense quenching Soul!—*Ferishtah's Fancies.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



FEBRUARY THIRD

If you will only promise to treat me *en bon camarade*, without reference to the conventionalities of "ladies and gentlemen," taking no thought for your sentences (nor for mine), nor for your blots (nor for mine), nor for your blunt speaking (nor for mine), nor for your badd speling (nor for mine), and if you agree to send me blotted thought whenever you are in the mind for it, and with as little ceremony and less legibility than you would think it necessary to employ towards your printer—why, *then*, I am ready to sign and seal the contract, and to rejoice in being articulated as your correspondent. Only *don't* let us have any constraint, any ceremony.—*E. B. to R. B., Feb. 3, 1845.*

FEBRUARY FOURTH

We shall start up, at last awake
From Life, that insane dream we take
For waking now, because it seems.
Easter Day.

FEBRUARY FIFTH

Books are men of higher stature,
And the only men who speak aloud for future
times to hear.

Lady Geraldine's Courtship.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



FEBRUARY SIXTH

I felt a mother-want about the world,
And still went seeking, like a bleating lamb
Left out at night, in shutting up the fold,—
As restless as a nest-deserted bird
Grown chill through something being away,
 though what
It knows not. —*Aurora Leigh.*

FEBRUARY SEVENTH

And thus I know this earth is not my sphere,
For I cannot so narrow me, but that
I still exceed it. —*Pauline.*

FEBRUARY EIGHTH

Youth is a pleasant burden to me;
But age on my head, more heavily
Than the crags of Etna, weighs and weighs,
And darkening cloaks the lids and intercepts
 the rays.
Never be mine the preference
Of an Asian empire's wealth, nor yet
Of a house all gold, to youth, to youth
That's beauty, whatever the gods dispense!
Whether in wealth we joy, or fret
Paupers,—of all God's gifts most beautiful,
 in truth. —*Herakles.*

FROM DAY TO DAY

FEBRUARY NINTH

In man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and unconscious forms of life.
We called it an advance. —*Cleon.*

FEBRUARY TENTH

A woman's always younger than a man
At equal years. —*Aurora Leigh.*

FEBRUARY ELEVENTH

If nobody likes writing to everybody, yet
everybody likes writing to somebody.
E. B. to R. B., Feb. 3, 1845.

FEBRUARY TWELFTH

All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall:
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand
sure. —*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

FEBRUARY THIRTEENTH

Truth that peeps
Over the glass's edge when dinner's done,
And body gets its sop, and holds its noise,
And leaves the soul free a little.
Bishop Blougram's Apology.

WITH THE BROWNING



FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH

Man I am and man would be, Love—merest man
and nothing more.

Bid me seem no other! Eagles boast of pinions
—let them soar!

I may put forth angel's plumage, once un-
manned, but not before.

Now on earth, to stand suffices,—nay, if kneel-
ing serves, to kneel:

Here you front me, here I find the all of Heaven
earth can feel:

Sense looks straight,—not over, under,—per-
fect sees beyond appeal.

Good you are and wise, full circle: what to me
were more outside?

Wiser wisdom, better goodness? Ah, such want
the angel's wide

Sense to take and hold and keep them! Mine
at least has never tried.

Ferishtah's Fancies.

FEBRUARY FIFTEENTH

Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

Apparent Failure.

FROM DAY TO DAY



FEBRUARY SIXTEENTH

What youth deemed crystal, age finds out was
dew. —*Jochanan Hakkadosh.*

FEBRUARY SEVENTEENTH

The curious thing in this world is not the stupidity, but the upper-handism of the stupidity. The geese are in the Capitol, and the Romans in the farmyard—and it seems all quite natural that it should be so, both to geese and Romans.

E. B. to R. B., Feb. 17, 1845.

FEBRUARY EIGHTEENTH

Ask not one least word of praise!

Words declare your eyes are bright?

What then meant that summer day's

Silence spent in one long gaze?

Was my silence wrong or right?

Words of praise were all to seek!

Face of you and form of you,

Did they find the praise so weak

When my lips just touched your cheek—

Touch which let my soul come through?

Ferishtah's Fancies.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



FEBRUARY NINETEENTH

You, for example, clever to a fault,
The rough and ready man, who write apace,
Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even
less. —*Bishop Blougram's Apology.*

FEBRUARY TWENTIETH

Say after me, and try to say
My very words, as if each word
Came from you of your own accord,
In your own voice, in your own way:
"This woman's heart and soul and brain
Are mine as much as this gold chain
She bids me wear; which" (say again)
"I choose to make by cherishing
A precious thing, or choose to fling
Over the boat-side, ring by ring."
And yet once more say . . . no word more!
Since words are only words. Give o'er!
In a Gondola.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIRST

Such man, she knew, being mere man ('twas all
she knew),
Must be made sure by beauty's silken bond,
The weakness that subdues the strong, and bows
Wisdom alike and folly.
The Ring and the Book.

FROM DAY TO DAY



FEBRUARY TWENTY-SECOND

For even prosaic men, who wear grief long,
Will get to wear it as a hat aside
With a feather stuck in 't.

Aurora Leigh.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-THIRD

You groped your way across my room i' the
drear dark dead of night;
At each fresh step a stumble was: but, once
your lamp alight,
Easy and plain you walked again: so soon all
wrong grew right!

What lay on floor to trip your foot? Each
object, late awry,
Looked fitly placed, nor proved offence to foot-
ing free—for why?
The lamp showed all, discordant late, grown
simple symmetry.

Be love your light and trust your guide, with
these explore my heart!
No obstacle to trip you then, strike hands and
souls apart!
Since rooms and hearts are furnished so,—light
shows you,—needs love's start?

Ferishtah's Fancies.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



FEBRUARY TWENTY-FOURTH

God will estimate success some day.
Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIFTH

And so you found that poor room dull,
Dark, hardly to your taste, my dear?
Its features seemed unbeautiful:

But this I know—'twas there, not here,
You plighted troth to me, the word
Which—ask that poor room how it heard.

And this rich room obtains your praise
Unqualified,—so bright, so fair,
So all whereat perfection stays?

Aye, but remember—here, not there,
The other word was spoken!—Ask
This rich room how you dropped the mask!
Appearances.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SIXTH

Heaven will make strong
The hand as the true heart. —*Strafford.*

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SEVENTH

When is a man strong, until he feels alone?
Colombe's Birthday.

FROM DAY TO DAY



FEBRUARY TWENTY-EIGHTH

Thou comest! all is said without a word.
I sit beneath thy looks, as children do
In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through
Their happy eyelids from an unaverred
Yet prodigal inward joy.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-NINTH

Thank God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is
well—

That is light grieving! lighter, none befell
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears! what are tears? The babe weeps in its
cot,

The mother singing; at her marriage-bell
The bride weeps, and before the oracle
Of high-faned hills the poet has forgot
Such moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for
grace,

Ye who weep only! If, as some have done,
Ye grope tear-blinded in a desert place
And touch but tombs,—look up! those tears
will run

Soon in long rivers down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

Tears.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MARCH

MARCH FIRST

Oh, what a dawn of day!
How the March sun feels like May!
 All is blue again
 After last night's rain,
And the South dries the hawthorn-spray,
 Only, my Love's away!
I'd as lief that the blue were gray.

Runnels, which rillels swell,
Must be dancing down the dell,
 With a foaming head
 On the beryl bed
Paven smooth as hermit's cell;
 Each with a tale to tell,
Could my Love but attend as well.

Dearest, three months ago!
When we lived blocked up with snow,—
 When the wind would edge
 In and in his wedge,
In, as far as the point could go—
 Not to our ingle, though,
Where we loved each the other so!
 A Lover's Quarrel.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MARCH SECOND

The great mind knows the power of gentleness,
Only tries force because persuasion fails.

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.

MARCH THIRD

Last night I saw you in my sleep:

And how your charm of face was changed!
I asked, "Some love, some faith you keep?"

You answered, "Faith gone, love estranged."

Whereat I woke—a twofold bliss:

Waking was one, but next there came
This other: "Though I felt, for this,
My heart break, I loved on the same."

Bad Dreams, I.

MARCH FOURTH

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to
clear,

Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the
weal and woe:

But God has a few of us whom He whispers in
the ear;

The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we
musicians know. —*Abt Vogler.*

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MARCH FIFTH

We have hearts within,
Warm, live, improvident, indecent hearts.
Aurora Leigh.

MARCH SIXTH

Be sure they sleep not whom God needs! Nor
fear
Their holding light His charge, when every
hour
That finds that charge delayed, is a new death.
Paracelsus.

MARCH SEVENTH

What does the world, told truth, but lie the
more?
The Ring and the Book.

MARCH EIGHTH

Mere largeness in a life is something, sure—
A great is better than a little aim.
Colombe's Birthday.

MARCH NINTH

Whoso loves believes the impossible.
Aurora Leigh.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MARCH TENTH

What stops my despair?
This;—'tis not what man Does which exalts
him, but what man Would do!

Saul.

MARCH ELEVENTH

Through the Valley of Love I went,
In its loveliest spot to abide,
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent
I found Hate dwelling beside.
And further, I traversed Hate's grove,
In its hatefullest nook to dwell;
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched
Love
Where the deepest shadows fell.

Pippa Passes.

MARCH TWELFTH

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the
man's amount.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



MARCH THIRTEENTH

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
For these things in themselves, belovéd, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love,
so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks
dry,—
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.
Sonnets from the Portuguese.

MARCH FOURTEENTH

I send my heart up to thee, all my heart
In this my singing.
For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets to leave one space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling-
place. *—In a Gondola.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



MARCH FIFTEENTH

Are there not, dear Michal,
Two points in the adventure of the diver,
One,—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge?
One,—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?
Paracelsus.

MARCH SIXTEENTH

Two human loves make one divine.
Isobel's Child.

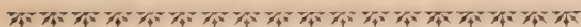
MARCH SEVENTEENTH

Nay but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

Because you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over;
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught—speak truth—above
her?
Above this tress, and this, I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

Song.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MARCH EIGHTEENTH

If one could have that little face of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mold
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft
In the pure profile: not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burden of honey-colored buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.

A Face.

MARCH NINETEENTH

Every age
Through being beheld too close, is ill discerned.
Aurora Leigh.

MARCH TWENTIETH

Thou dost well in rejecting the mere comforts
that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by
man and the brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in
our soul it bears fruit.

Saul.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MARCH TWENTY-FIRST

That gift of his from God descended.
Ah, friend, what gift of man's does not.
Christmas Eve.

MARCH TWENTY-SECOND

God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.
The Dead Pan.

MARCH TWENTY-THIRD

Since when was genius found respectable?
Aurora Leigh.

MARCH TWENTY-FOURTH

Luitolfo was the proper
Friend-making, everywhere friend-finding soul,
Fit for the sunshine, so, it followed him.
A happy-tempered bringer of the best
Out of the worst. —*A Soul's Tragedy.*

MARCH TWENTY-FIFTH

We find great things are made of little things,
And little things go lessening, till at last
Comes God behind them.
Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MARCH TWENTY-SIXTH

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly He trod
Paradise, His presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" "Why small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

Pippa Passes.

MARCH TWENTY-SEVENTH

Oppression makes the wise man mad.
Luria.

MARCH TWENTY-EIGHTH

Why, where's the need of Temple, when the walls
O' the world are that? —*Dramatis Personæ.*

MARCH TWENTY-NINTH

When the prophet beats the ass,
The angel intercedes. —*Aurora Leigh.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



MARCH THIRTIETH

Love-making,—how simple a matter! No
depths to explore,
No heights in a life to ascend! No dishearten-
ing Before,
No affrighting Hereafter,—love now will be
love evermore.
So I felt “To keep silence were folly:”—all
language above,
I made love.

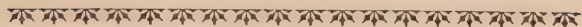
Ferishtah's Fancies.

MARCH THIRTY-FIRST

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the
bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the
heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the
shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine, wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them!—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—
all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

Summum Bonum.

WITH THE BROWINGS



APRIL

APRIL FIRST

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood
 sheaf
Round the elm-tree boles are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

Home-Thoughts, from Abroad.

APRIL SECOND

In youth I looked to these very skies
And, probing their immensities,
I found God there, His visible power;
Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
Of the power, an equal evidence
That His love, there too, was the nobler dower.
For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless god
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

Christmas Eve.

FROM DAY TO DAY

APRIL THIRD

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world!

Pippa Passes.

APRIL FOURTH

I act for, talk for, live for this world now,
As this world calls for action, life and talk—
No prejudice to what next world may prove.

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

APRIL FIFTH

Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this
world.

—*Pippa Passes.*

APRIL SIXTH

I seek no copy now of life's first half:
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
And write me new my future's epigraph,
New angel mine, unhop'd for in the world!

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

WITH THE BROWNING



APRIL SEVENTH

Man's work is to labor and leaven—
As best he may—earth here with Heaven;
'Tis work for work's sake that he's needing.
Of Pacchiarotto.

APRIL EIGHTH

The devil's most devilish when respectable.
Aurora Leigh.

APRIL NINTH

'Tis in the advance of individual minds
That the slow crowd should ground their ex-
pectation
Eventually to follow; as the sea
Waits ages in its bed till some one wave
Out of the multitudinous mass, extends
The empire of the whole. —*Paracelsus.*

APRIL TENTH

The thing that seems
Mere misery, under human schemes,
Becomes, regarded by the light
Of Love, as very near, or quite
As good a gift as joy before.
Christmas Eve.

FROM DAY TO DAY



APRIL ELEVENTH

Look round, look up, and feel, a moment's
space,
That carpet-dusting, though a pretty trade,
Is not the imperative labor after all.
Aurora Leigh.

APRIL TWELFTH

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the
price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in
a trice. —*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

APRIL THIRTEENTH

There's a further good conceivable
Beyond the utmost earth can realize.
Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.

APRIL FOURTEENTH

Only the prism's obstruction shows aright
The secret of a sunbeam, breaks its light
Into the jewelled bow from blankest white;
So may a glory from defect arise.
Deaf and Dumb.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



APRIL FIFTEENTH

Earth is a wintry clod;
But spring-wind, like a dancing psaltress,
 passes
Over its breast to awaken it; rare verdure
Buds tenderly upon rough banks, between
The withered tree-roots and the cracks of frost,
Like a smile striving with a wrinkled face;
Above birds fly in merry flocks—the lark
Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing gulls
Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe
Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek
Their loves in wood and plain; and God renews
His ancient rapture.

Paracelsus.

APRIL SIXTEENTH

Near all the birds
Will sing at dawn—and yet we do not take
The chaffering swallow for the holy lark.

Aurora Leigh.

APRIL SEVENTEENTH

Saints, to do us good, must be in Heaven.
The Ring and the Book.

FROM DAY TO DAY



APRIL EIGHTEENTH

Here's the spring back or close,
When the almond-blossom blows;
We shall have the word
In that minor third
There is none but the cuckoo knows—
Heaps of the guelder-rose!
I must bear with it, I suppose.
A Lover's Quarrel.

APRIL NINETEENTH

Say again, what we are?
The sprite of a star,
I lure thee above where the destinies bar
My plumes their full play
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is withering
away
Some . . . Scatter the vision forever! And now,
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!
In a Gondola.

APRIL TWENTIETH

Of all the commerce done in the world, from
Tyre to Carthage, the exchange of sympathy
for gratitude is the most princely thing.
E. B. to R. B., Jan. 11, 1845.

WITH THE BROWINGS



APRIL TWENTY-FIRST

What girl but, having gathered flowers,
Stripped the beds and spoilt the bowers,
From the lapful light she carries
Drops a careless bud?—nor tarries
To regain the waif and stray:
“Store enough for home”—she’ll say.

So say I too: give your lover
Heaps of loving—under, over,
Whelm him—make the one the wealthy!
Am I all so poor who—stealthy
Work it was!—picked up what fell:
Not the worst bud—who can tell?
Humility.

APRIL TWENTY-SECOND

Thought is the soul of act.
Sordello.

APRIL TWENTY-THIRD

Spring’s first breath
Blew soft from the moist hills—the blackthorn
boughs,
So dark in the bare woods, when glistening
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,
Like the bright side of a sorrow.
Pauline.

FROM DAY TO DAY



APRIL TWENTY-FOURTH

You never know what life means till you die:
Even throughout life, 'tis death that makes life
live,

Give it whatever the significance.

The Ring and the Book.

APRIL TWENTY-FIFTH

There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying
sound;

What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so
much good more;

On earth the broken arcs; in heaven, a perfect
round.

—*Abt Vogler.*

APRIL TWENTY-SIXTH

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!

But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure tho' seldom, are denied us,

When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,

And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

Christina.

WITH THE BROWINGS



APRIL TWENTY-SEVENTH

The moth's kiss, first!

Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so, here and there
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

The bee's kiss, now!

Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.
In a Gondola.

APRIL TWENTY-EIGHTH

Life treads on life, and heart on heart,
We press too close, in church and mart,
To keep a dream or grave apart.
Vision of Poets.

APRIL TWENTY-NINTH

One does see somewhat when one shuts one's
eyes. —*Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."*

FROM DAY TO DAY



APRIL THIRTIETH

All I can say is—I saw it!
The room was as bare as your hand.
I locked in the swarth little lady,—I swear,
From the head to the foot of her—well, quite
as bare!
“No Nautch shall cheat me,” said I, “taking
my stand
At this bolt which I draw!” And this bolt—
I withdraw it,
And there stands the lady, not bare, but em-
bowered
With—who knows what verdure, o’erfruited,
o’erflowered?
Impossible! Only—I saw it!

All I can sing is—I feel it!
This life was as blank as that room;
I let you pass in here. Precaution, indeed?
Walls, ceiling, and floor,—not a chance for a
weed!
Wide opens the entrance: where’s cold now,
where’s gloom?
No May to sow seed here, no June to reveal it,
Behold you enshrined in these blooms of your
bringing,
These fruits of your bearing—nay, birds of
your winging!
A fairy tale! Only—I feel it!—*Natural Magic*.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MAY

MAY FIRST

And after April, when May follows
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song
twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary
dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!
Home-Thoughts, from Abroad.

MAY SECOND

If you get simple beauty, and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents.
Fra Lippo Lippi.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MAY THIRD

People would hardly ever tell falsehoods
about a matter, if they had been let tell truth
in the beginning.

R. B. to E. B., Feb. 11, 1845.

MAY FOURTH

Shutting out fear with all the strength of hope.

... The sunrise

Well warranted our faith in this full noon!

Paracelsus.

MAY FIFTH

A living glory-bath
Of air and light where seems to float and move
The wooded watered country, hill and dale
And steel-bright thread of stream, a-smoke with
mist,
A-sparkle with May morning, diamond drift
O' the sun-touched dew.

The Inn Album.

MAY SIXTH

The incoherences of change and death
Are represented fully, mixed and merged,
In the smooth fair mystery of perpetual Life.
Aurora Leigh.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



MAY SEVENTH

'Tis a fine thing that one, weak as myself,
Should sit in his lone room, knowing the words
He utters in his solitude shall move
Men like a swift wind—that though he be forgotten,
Fair eyes shall glisten when his beauteous
dreams
Of love, come true in happier frames than his.

Pauline.

MAY EIGHTH

The god in babe's disguise.
Reading a Book.

MAY NINTH

Women know
The way to rear up children (to be just),
They know a simple, merry, tender knack
Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,
And stringing pretty words that make no sense,
And kissing full sense into empty words;
Which things are corals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles. —*Aurora Leigh.*

MAY TENTH

I judge people by what they might be—not are,
nor will be. —*A Soul's Tragedy.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



MAY ELEVENTH

The proper process of unsinching sin
Is to begin well doing.

The Ring and the Book.

MAY TWELFTH

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
"There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
"New worlds that from my footstool go."

The Boy and the Angel.

MAY THIRTEENTH

It is well to fly towards the light, even where
there may be some fluttering and bruising of
wings against the windowpanes, is it not?

E. B. to R. B., March 5, 1845.

MAY FOURTEENTH

Thou hast
Life, then—wilt challenge life for us: Thy race
Is vindicated so, obtains its place
In Thy ascent, the first of us; whom we
May follow, to the meanest, finally,
With our more bounded wills. —*Sordello.*

WITH THE BROWNINGS



MAY FIFTEENTH

Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!
The Two Poets of Croisic.

MAY SIXTEENTH

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found
made.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

MAY SEVENTEENTH

Womanliness means only motherhood;
All love begins and ends there.

The Inn Album.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MAY EIGHTEENTH

The great beacon-light God sets in all,
The conscience of each bosom. —*Strafford.*

MAY NINETEENTH

You paint a portrait for a friend,
Who keeps it in a drawer and looks at it
Long after he has ceased to love you, just
To hold together what he was and is.
Aurora Leigh.

MAY TWENTIETH

“There is no God,” the foolish saith,
But none, “There is no sorrow”;
And nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.
Cry of the Human.

MAY TWENTY-FIRST

And thus looking within and around me, I ever
renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending
upraises it too)
The submission of Man’s nothing-perfect to
God’s All-Complete;
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to
His feet! —*Saul.*

WITH THE BROWINGS



MAY TWENTY-SECOND

Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!

Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good is life since?

Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who knows?

Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!

Flower o' the pine,
You keep your manners, and I'll stick to mine!

Flower o' the peach,
Death for us all, and his own life for each!

Fra Lippo Lippi.

MAY TWENTY-THIRD

The past is in its grave,
Though its ghost haunts us.

Pauline.

MAY TWENTY-FOURTH

A man can have but one life, and one death,
One heaven, one hell.

In a Balcony.

FROM DAY TO DAY



MAY TWENTY-FIFTH

Had I no experience how a lip's mere tremble,
Look's half hesitation, cheek's just change of
color,
These effect a heartquake,—how should I conceive
What a heaven there may be? Let it but resemble
Earth myself have known! No bliss that's
finer, fuller,
Only—bliss that lasts, they say, and fain would
I believe. —*Ferishtah's Fancies.*

MAY TWENTY-SIXTH

Praise is deeper than the lips. —*Hervé Riel.*

MAY TWENTY-SEVENTH

I have not chanted verse like Homer's, no—
Nor swept string like Terpander, no—nor
carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend:
I am not great as they are, point by point:
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each other's arts.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?
Cleon.

WITH THE BROWNING



MAY TWENTY-EIGHTH

I dwell amid the city ever.
The great humanity which beats
Its life along the stony streets,
Like a strong and unsunned river
In a selfmade course,
I sit and hearken while it rolls.
Very sad and very hoarse
Certes is the flow of souls;
Infinitest tendencies
By the finite pressed and pent,
In the finite, turbulent:
How we tremble in surprise
When sometimes, with an awful sound,
God's great plummet strikes the ground!
The Soul's Traveling.

MAY TWENTY-NINTH

And what is our failure here but a triumph's
evidence
For the fulness of the days? —*Abt Vogler.*

MAY THIRTIETH

Perfect strains may float
'Neath master-hands, from instruments de-
faced,—
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and
doat.—*Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



MAY THIRTY-FIRST

Good, to forgive;
 Best, to forget!
 Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
 Soul, clap thy pinion!
 Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

Wander at will,
 Day after day,—
 Wander away,
Wandering still—
Soul that canst soar!
 Body may slumber:
 Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

Waft of soul's wing!
 What lies above?
 Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring!
Body hides—where?
 Ferns of all feather,
 Mosses, and heather,
Yours be the care!

La Saisiaz.

WITH THE BROWNING



JUNE

JUNE FIRST

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
 (If our loves remain)
 In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
 Making love, say,—
 The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
 With the beanflowers' boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

"De Gustibus —"

JUNE SECOND

It was roses, roses all the way.
The Patriot.

JUNE THIRD

You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
Fra Lippo Lippi.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JUNE FOURTH

What's the best thing in the world?
June-rose, by May-dew impearled;
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain;
Truth, not cruel to a friend;
Pleasure, not in haste to end;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled
Till its pride is over-plain;
Light, that never makes you wink;
Memory, that gives no pain;
Love, when, *so*, you're loved again.
What's the best thing in the world?
—Something out of it, I think.

The Best Thing in the World.

JUNE FIFTH

Well for those who live through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring
poms
Which triumph at the heels of sovereign June,
Leading his glorious revel through our world!

Pippa Passes.

JUNE SIXTH

Any nose
May ravage with impunity a rose.
Sordello.

WITH THE BROWNING



JUNE SEVENTH

You'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
At least is sure to strike,
And yield—what you'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What's death? You'll love me yet!
Pippa Passes.

JUNE EIGHTH

God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides,—one to face the world
with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.
One Word More.

JUNE NINTH

O world as God has made it! All is beauty.
The Guardian Angel.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JUNE TENTH

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?

The Last Ride Together.

JUNE ELEVENTH

“Yes!” I answered you last night;
“No!” this morning, sir, I say:
Colors seen by candlelight
Will not look the same by day.

The Lady's Yes.

JUNE TWELFTH

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be
And was not, comforts me.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

JUNE THIRTEENTH

Keep but ever looking, whether with the
body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find
something to look on! —*Pippa Passes.*

WITH THE BROWNINGS



JUNE FOURTEENTH

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
 Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
 Its soft meandering Spanish name:
What a name! Was it love or praise?
 Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
 Only for that sweet name's sake. . . .

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
 Whither I follow her, beauties flee;
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
 June's twice June since she breathed it with
 me?
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
 Treasure my lady's lightest footfall!—
Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
 Roses, you are not so fair after all!
 The Flower's Name.

JUNE FIFTEENTH

There is no good of life but love—but love!
What else looks good, is some shade flung from
 love—
Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be warned by me.
 In a Balcony.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JUNE SIXTEENTH

No, when the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something.

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

JUNE SEVENTEENTH

Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick—I see what I have done,
Entirely now! . . . God's in His heaven!

Pippa Passes.

JUNE EIGHTEENTH

I envy—how I envy him whose mind
Turns with its energies to some one end!

Pauline.

JUNE NINETEENTH

There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth.
A Soul's Tragedy.

JUNE TWENTIETH

Such was ever love's way ; to rise, it stoops.
A Death in the Desert.

WITH THE BROWNING



JUNE TWENTY-FIRST

Love you seek for, presupposes
Summer heat and sunny glow.
Tell me, do you find moss-roses
Budding, blooming in the snow?
Snow might kill the rose tree's root—
Shake it quickly from your foot,
Lest it harm you as you go.

From the ivy where it dapples
A gray ruin, stone by stone
Do you look for grapes or apples,
Or for sad green leaves alone?
Pluck the leaves off, two or three—
Keep them for morality
When you shall be safe and gone.
Question and Answer.

JUNE TWENTY-SECOND

Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will.
The Statue and the Bust.

JUNE TWENTY-THIRD

There's a real love of a lie,
Liars find ready made for lies they make.
Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."

FROM DAY TO DAY



JUNE TWENTY-FOURTH

And here am I the scoffer, who have probed
Life's vanity, won by a word again
Into my old life—for one little word
Of this sweet friend, who lives in loving me.
Pauline.

JUNE TWENTY-FIFTH

Fire is in the flint: true, once a spark escapes,
Fire forgets the kinship, soars till fancy shapes
Some befitting cradle where the babe had
birth—
Wholly Heaven's the product, unallied to earth.
Splendors recognized as perfect in the star!—
In our flint their home was, housed as now they
are.

Ferishtah's Fancies.

JUNE TWENTY-SIXTH

Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to muse
Upon the scheme of earth, and man in chief,
That admiration grows as knowledge grows?
That imperfection means perfection hid,
Reserved in part to grace the after-time?
Cleon.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



JUNE TWENTY-SEVENTH

You love all, you say,
Round, beneath, above me:
Find me then some way
Better than to love me,
Me, too, dearest May!

O world-kissing eyes
Which the blue heavens melt to;
I sad, otherwise,
Loathe the sweet looks dealt to
All things—men and flies.

You love all, you say:
Therefore, Dear, abate me
Just your love, I pray!
Shut your eyes and hate me—
Only me—fair May!

May's Love.

JUNE TWENTY-EIGHTH

So we will go and think again,
And all old loves shall come to us—but changed
As some sweet thought which harsh words veiled
before;

Feeling God loves us, and that all that errs,
Is a strange dream which death will dissipate.

Pauline.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JUNE TWENTY-NINTH

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this,—
“He giveth His belovéd sleep”?—*The Sleep*

JUNE THIRTIETH

All June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves
And strew them where Pauline must pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string; fold music's wing:
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion—heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they!

One Way of Love.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



JULY

JULY FIRST

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,

FROM DAY TO DAY

Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

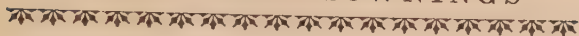
Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

A Musical Instrument.

JULY SECOND

Youth means love;
Vows can't change nature.
The Ring and the Book.

WITH THE BROWNING



JULY THIRD

A people is but the attempt of many
To rise to the completer life of one;
And those who live as models for the mass
Are singly of more value than they all.

Luria.

JULY FOURTH

But little do or can the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is
"Why." — *Why I am a Liberal.*

JULY FIFTH

Truth is within ourselves: it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness.

Paracelsus.

JULY SIXTH

Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be
true!

In a Balcony.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JULY SEVENTH

Man must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good, to what now
proves best.—*A Death in the Desert.*

JULY EIGHTH

Why waste a word, or let a tear escape,
While other sorrows wait you in the world.
Balaustion's Adventure.

JULY NINTH

Would you have your songs endure?
Build on the human heart. —*Sordello.*

JULY TENTH

I have not so far left the coasts of life
To travel inland, that I cannot hear
That murmur of the outer Infinite
Which unweaned babes smile at in their sleep
When wondered at for smiling.
Aurora Leigh.

JULY ELEVENTH

Ever with the best desert goes diffidence.
A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

WITH THE BROWNING



JULY TWELFTH

This is a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet
hung to,—
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

This is a heart the Queen leant on,
Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on,
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went
on—
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!
Misconceptions.

JULY THIRTEENTH

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire!
The Ring and the Book.

JULY FOURTEENTH

Stark-naked truth is in request enough.
"Transcendentalism."

FROM DAY TO DAY

JULY FIFTEENTH

Needs must there be one way, our chief
Best way of worship: let me strive
To find it, and when found, contrive
My fellows also take their share.

Easter Day.

JULY SIXTEENTH

With truth and purity go other gifts!
All gifts come clustering to that.

The Return of the Druses.

JULY SEVENTEENTH

Genius has somewhat of the infantine:
But of the childish not a touch or taint.

Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangan.

JULY EIGHTEENTH

Who keeps one end in view makes all things
serve.

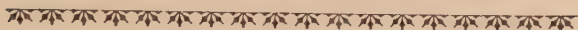
In a Balcony.

JULY NINETEENTH

Life is probation, and the earth no goal
But starting point of man.

The Ring and the Book.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



JULY TWENTIETH

There is no one beside thee and no one above
thee,

Thou standest alone as the nightingale sings!
And my words that would praise thee are im-
potent things,

For none could express thee though all should
approve thee.

I love thee so, dear, that I only can love thee.

Say, what can I do for thee? weary thee, grieve
thee?

Lean on thy shoulder, new burdens to add?

Weep my tears over thee, making thee sad?

Oh, hold me not—love me not! let me retrieve
thee.

I love thee, so, dear, that I only can leave thee.

Insufficiency.

JULY TWENTY-FIRST

There's many a crown for who can reach.

The Last Ride Together.

JULY TWENTY-SECOND

Other heights in other lives, God willing:

All the gifts from all the heights, your own,
love!

—*One Word More.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



JULY TWENTY-THIRD

Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things.

Abt Vogler.

JULY TWENTY-FOURTH

Inscribe all human effort with one word,
Artistry's haunting curse, the Incomplete!
The Ring and the Book.

JULY TWENTY-FIFTH

Never cheat yourself one instant. Love,
Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest.
In a Balcony.

JULY TWENTY-SIXTH

The thing I pity most
In man is—action prompted by surprise
Of anger.

A Forgiveness.

JULY TWENTY-SEVENTH

This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank—it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
Fra Lippo Lippi.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



JULY TWENTY-EIGHTH

A simple ring with a single stone,
To the vulgar no stone of price:
Whisper the right word, that alone—
Forth starts a sprite, like fire from ice,
And lo, you are lord (says an Eastern scroll)
Of Heaven and earth, lord whole and sole
Through the power in a pearl.

A woman ('tis I this time that say)
With little the world counts worthy praise:
Utters the true word—out and away
Escapes her soul: I am wrapped in blaze,
Creation's lord, of Heaven and earth
Lord whole and sole—by a minute's birth—
Through the love in a girl.

A Pearl, a Girl.

JULY TWENTY-NINTH

'Tis the taught already that profits by teach-
ing. —*Christmas Eve.*

JULY THIRTIETH

I will pass by and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!

Pippa Passes.

FROM DAY TO DAY



JULY THIRTY-FIRST

Sweet, thou hast trod on a heart.

Pass; there's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

Thou hast only stepped unaware,—
Malice, not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there
In the way of a fair woman's foot?

It was not a stone that could trip,
Nor was it a thorn that could rend:
Put up thy proud under-lip!
'Twas merely the heart of a friend.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the look gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement was.

And seeking around thee in vain
From hundreds who flattered before,
Such a word as "Oh, not in the main
Do I hold thee less precious, but more!" . . .

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
"Of all I have known or could know,
I wish I had only that Heart
I trod upon ages ago!" —*A False Step.*

WITH THE BROWNING



AUGUST

AUGUST FIRST

Wanting is—what?

Summer redundant,

Blueness abundant,

—Where is the blot?

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,

—Framework which waits for a picture to
frame:

What of the leafage, what of the flower?

Roses embowering with naught they embower!

Come then, complete incompleteness, O come,

Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!

Breathe but one breath

Rose-beauty above,

And all that was death

Grows life, grows love,

Grows love. —*Wanting is—What?*

AUGUST SECOND

Earth's crammed with heaven,

And every common bush afire with God;

But only he who sees, takes off his shoes;

The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,

And daub their natural faces unaware

More and more from the first similitude.

Aurora Leigh.

FROM DAY TO DAY



AUGUST THIRD

It was not strange I saw no good in man,
In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success.

Paracelsus.

AUGUST FOURTH

And because my heart I proffered,
With true love trembling at the brim,
He suffers me to follow him.

Christmas Eve.

AUGUST FIFTH

But a bird's weight can break the infant tree
Which after holds an aery in its arms.

Luria.

AUGUST SIXTH

I feel, sweet friend,
As one breathing his weakness to the ear
Of pitying angel—dear as a winter flower;
A slight flower growing all alone, and offering
Its frail cup of three leaves to the cold sun,
Yet joyous and confiding, like the triumph
Of a child.

—Pauline.

WITH THE BROWNING



AUGUST SEVENTH

Out of your whole life give but a moment!
All of your life that has gone before,
All to come after it,—so you ignore,
So you make perfect the present,—condense,
In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endow-
ment,
Thought and feeling and soul and sense—
Merged in a moment which gives me at last
You around me for once, you beneath me, above
me—
Me—sure that despite of time future, time
past,—
This tick of our lifetime's one moment you love
me!
How long such suspension may linger? Ah,
Sweet—
The moment's eternal—just that and no more—
When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core
While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut, and
lips meet!— —Now.

AUGUST EIGHTH

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes,—
The past was a sleep, and her life began.
The Statue and the Bust.

FROM DAY TO DAY



AUGUST NINTH

How good is man's life here, mere living!
How fit to employ
The heart and the soul and the senses
Foreevr in joy! —*Saul.*

AUGUST TENTH

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good
shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor
good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth but each survives
for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conceptions of an
hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for
earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself
in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the
bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it
by-and-by. —*Abt Vogler.*

AUGUST ELEVENTH

'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
And matter enough to save one's own.
A Light Woman.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



AUGUST TWELFTH

Some people always sigh in thanking God.
Aurora Leigh.

AUGUST THIRTEENTH

O, world, as God has made it! all its beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?
The Guardian Angel.

AUGUST FOURTEENTH

I knew you once: but in Paradise,
If we meet, I will pass nor turn my face.
The Worst of It.

AUGUST FIFTEENTH

How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!
Confessions.

AUGUST SIXTEENTH

Some think Creation's meant to show Him forth:
I say, it's meant to hide Him all it can,
And that's what all the blessed Evil's for.
Bishop Blougram's Apology.

FROM DAY TO DAY



AUGUST SEVENTEENTH

All women love great men
If young or old ; it is in all the tales.
In a Balcony.

AUGUST EIGHTEENTH

But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And baffled, get up to begin again,—
So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.
Life in a Love.

AUGUST NINETEENTH

Be sure that God
Ne'er dooms to waste the strength He deigns
impart.
Paracelsus.

AUGUST TWENTIETH

I see!
You would grow smoothly as a tree,
Soar heavenward, straightly up like fire—
God bless you—there's your world entire!
Easter-Day.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



AUGUST TWENTY-FIRST

You've seen the world—
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and
shades,

Changes, surprises,—And God made it all!

Fra Lippo Lippi.

AUGUST TWENTY-SECOND

If this be all—

And other life await us not—for one,

I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,

A wretched failure. I, for one, protest

Against it, and I hurl it back with scorn.

Paracelsus.

AUGUST TWENTY-THIRD

Love's undoing

Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,

And what proportion love should hold with
power

In his right constitution; love preceding

Power, and with much power, always much more
love;

Love still too straitened in his present means,

And earnest for new power to set love free.

Paracelsus.

FROM DAY TO DAY

AUGUST TWENTY-FOURTH

So in man's self arise
August anticipations, symbols, types
Of a dim splendor ever on before
In that eternal circle life pursues.

Paracelsus.

AUGUST TWENTY-FIFTH

We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master, if the town but knew!
We merely kept a governor for form.

How it Strikes a Contemporary.

AUGUST TWENTY-SIXTH

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it?
here the parts shift?
Here the creatures surpass the Creator, the
end what Began? —*Saul.*

AUGUST TWENTY-SEVENTH

Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture.
One Word More.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



AUGUST TWENTY-EIGHTH

To-day's brief passion limits their range,

It seethes with the morrow for us and more.

They are perfect—how else? they shall never
change:

We are faulty—why not? we have time in
store.

The Artificer's hand is not arrested

With us—we are rough-hewn, no-wise
polished:

They stand for our copy, and, once invested

With all they can teach, we shall see them
abolished.

'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—

The better! what's come to perfection
perishes.

Things learned on earth, we shall practice in
heaven.

Works done least rapidly Art most cherishes.

Old Pictures in Florence.

AUGUST TWENTY-NINTH

My reason, blind myself to light, say truth

Is false, and lie to God and my own soul?

Contempt for all of this!

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

FROM DAY TO DAY



AUGUST THIRTIETH

Earth fades, Heaven dawns on me. I shall
awake next
Before God's throne: the moment's close at
hand
When man the first, last time, has leave to lay
His whole heart bare before his Maker—leave
To clear up the long error of a life
And choose one happiness for evermore.

Strafford.

AUGUST THIRTY-FIRST

"So say the foolish!" Say the foolish so, Love?
"Flower she is, my rose"—or else, "My very
swan is she"—
Or perhaps, "Yon maid-moon, blessing earth
below, Love,
That art Thou!"—to them, belike: no such
vain words from me.
"Hush, rose, blush! no balm like breath," I chide
it:
"Bend thy neck its best, swan,—hers the
whiter curve!"
Be the moon the moon: my Love I place beside
it:
What is she? Her human self,—no lower
word will serve.

—Poetics.

WITH THE BROWINGS



SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER FIRST

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and
fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!
Meeting at Night.

SEPTEMBER SECOND

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.
Parting at Morning.

FROM DAY TO DAY



SEPTEMBER THIRD

My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First.
Apparent Failure.

SEPTEMBER FOURTH

Young men, aye, and maids
Too often sow their wild oats in tame verse.
Aurora Leigh.

SEPTEMBER FIFTH

Life's inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy. . . .
And so a man can use but a man's joy
While he sees God's.

Cleon.

SEPTEMBER SIXTH

You're my friend—
What a thing friendship is, world without end!
The Flight of the Duchess.

SEPTEMBER SEVENTH

Who knows most, doubts not; entertaining hope
Means recognizing fear.
Two Poets of Croisic.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



SEPTEMBER EIGHTH

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
Slow to world-greetings, quick with its "Oh,
list,"

When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
I could not wear there, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss. The second passed in
height

The first, and sought the forehead, and half
missed,

Half falling on the hair. O beyond need!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own
crown,

With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down,
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, "My love, my
own."—*Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

SEPTEMBER NINTH

Be Hate that fruit, or Love that fruit,
It forwards the general Deed of Man,
And each of the Many helps to recruit
The life of the race by a general plan,
Each living his own, to boot.—*By the Fireside.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



SEPTEMBER TENTH

Man seeks his own good at the whole world's
cost. —*Luria.*

SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH

Ignorance is not innocence, but sin.
The Inn Album.

SEPTEMBER TWELFTH

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and
height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's
faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the
breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God
choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.
Sonnets from the Portuguese.

WITH THE BROWINGS



SEPTEMBER THIRTEENTH

Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow.

The Statue and the Bust.

SEPTEMBER FOURTEENTH

Till, from its summit,
Judgment drops its damning plummet,
Pronouncing such a fatal space
Departed from the founder's base.

Christmas Eve.

SEPTEMBER FIFTEENTH

I say, that as the babe, you feed awhile,
Becomes a boy and fit to feed himself,
So, minds at first must be spoon-fed with truth:
When they can eat, babe's-nurture is with-
drawn.

I say, that miracle was duly wrought
When, save for it, no faith were possible.

A Death in the Desert.

FROM DAY TO DAY



SEPTEMBER SIXTEENTH

Never fear but there's provision
Of the Devil's to quench knowledge
Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
Making those who catch God's secret
Just so much more prize their capture.
Christina.

SEPTEMBER SEVENTEENTH

I knew, I felt what God is, what we are,
What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
From whom all being emanates, all power
Proceeds; in whom is life for evermore,
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes. —*Paracelsus.*

SEPTEMBER EIGHTEENTH

Why with old truth needs new truth disagree?
Red Cotton Nightcap Country.

SEPTEMBER NINETEENTH

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.
The Statue and the Bust.

WITH THE BROWNING



SEPTEMBER TWENTIETH

Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul should make,
Of all that strong divineness which I know
For thine and thee, an image only so
Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.
It is that distant years which did not take
Thy sovranity, recoiling with a blow,
Have forced my swimming brain to undergo
Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake
Thy purity of likeness and distort
Thy worthiest love to a worthless counter-
feit:
As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port,
His guardian sea-god to commemorate,
Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snort
And vibrant tail, within the temple-gate.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FIRST

Yet, what we call this life of men on earth,
This sequence of the soul's achievements here,
Being, as I find much reason to conceive,
Intended to be viewed eventually
As a great whole, not analyzed to parts,
But each part having reference to all.

Cleon.

FROM DAY TO DAY



SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SECOND

If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.
Paracelsus.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-THIRD

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine
own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee
alone.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH

Autumn has come—like Spring returned to us,
Won from her girlishness—like one returned
A friend that was a lover—nor forgets
The first warm love, but full of sober thoughts
Of fading years; whose soft mouth quivers yet
With the old smile—but yet so changed and
still,
—Pauline.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH

Days decrease
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. —*Andrea del Sarto.*

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH

Do your best, whether winning or losing it,
If you choose to play—is my principle!
The Statue and the Bust.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH

You must not pump spring-water unawares
Upon a gracious public full of nerves.
Aurora Leigh.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH

What is left for us, save, in growth,
Of soul, to rise up, far past both,
From the gift looking to the Giver,
And from the cistern to the River,
And from the finite to Infinity,
And from man's dust to God's divinity?
Christmas Eve.

FROM DAY TO DAY



SEPTEMBER TWENTY-NINTH

And what procures a man the right to speak
In his defence before his fellow-man,
But—I suppose—the thought that presently
He may have leave to speak before his God
His whole defence?

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

SEPTEMBER THIRTIETH

That way
Over the mountain, which who stands upon
Is apt to doubt if it's indeed a road;
While if he views it from the waste itself,
Up goes the line there, plain from base to brow,
Not vague mistakeable! what's a break or two
Seen from the unbroken desert either side?
What if the breaks themselves should prove at
last
The most consummate of contrivances
To train a man's eye, teach him what is faith—
And so we stumble at truth's very test?
What have we gained then by our unbelief
But a life of doubt diversified by faith,
For one of faith diversified by doubt?
We called the chess-board white—we call it
black.

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER FIRST

Ah, Love, but a day
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped,
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped.

Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?
Should I find surprise?
Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year?

Thou art a man,
But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan;
For the dell, its dove;
'And for thee—(oh, haste!)
Me, to bend above,
Me, to hold embraced.

James Lee's Wife.

FROM DAY TO DAY



OCTOBER SECOND

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes and glances,
One of thy choices, or one of thy chances,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Pippa Passes.

OCTOBER THIRD

You know how love is incompatible
With falsehood—purifies, assimilates
All other passions to itself.

Colombe's Birthday.

OCTOBER FOURTH

Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be what it will!

The Statue and the Bust.

OCTOBER FIFTH

To have reared a towering scheme
Of happiness, and to behold it razed,
Were nothing: all men hope, and see their hopes
Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and hope anew.

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



OCTOBER SIXTH

Here's the top-peak! the multitude below
 Live, for they can there.
This man decided not to Live but Know—
 Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot,
 clouds form,
 Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! let joy break with the
 storm—
 Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
 Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
 Living and dying.
 A Grammarian's Funeral.

OCTOBER SEVENTH

Sweet the help of one we have helped.
 Aurora Leigh.

OCTOBER EIGHTH

You call for faith;
I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.
The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say,
If faith o'ercomes doubt.
 Bishop Blougram's Apology.

FROM DAY TO DAY



OCTOBER NINTH

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And through earth and its noise, what is
Heaven's serene,—
When its faith in the same hath stood the
test—
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,
The uses of labor are surely done.

Old Pictures in Florence.

OCTOBER TENTH

And, as I saw the sin and death, even so
See I the need and transiency of both,
The good and glory consummated thence.
I saw the power; I see the Love, once weak,
Resume the Power.

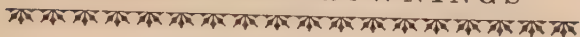
A Death in the Desert.

OCTOBER ELEVENTH

Think, when our one soul understands
The great Word which makes all things
new—
When earth breaks up and Heaven expands—
How will the change strike me and you
In the House not made with hands?

By the Fireside.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



OCTOBER TWELFTH

And therefore if to love can be desert,
I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale
As these you see, and trembling knees that
fail

To bear the burden of a heavy heart,—
This weary minstrel-life that once was girt
To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail
To pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale
A melancholy music,—why advert
To these things? O Belovéd, it is plain
I am not of thy worth nor for thy place!
And yet, because I love thee, I obtain
From that same love this vindicating grace,
To live on still in love, and yet in vain,—
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.
Sonnets from the Portuguese.

OCTOBER THIRTEENTH

Now may the good God pardon all good men!
Aurora Leigh.

OCTOBER FOURTEENTH

Folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed. And yet no
fool.

An Epistle.

FROM DAY TO DAY



OCTOBER FIFTEENTH

Light thwarted, breaks
A limpid purity to rainbow flakes,
Or Shadow, helped, freezes to gloom.
Sordello.

OCTOBER SIXTEENTH

Avaunt
Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on
me!
Nor even get a hold on me!
The Return of the Druses.

OCTOBER SEVENTEENTH

If I live yet, it is for good, more love
Through me to men: . . .
Such ever was love's way: to rise, it stoops.
A Death in the Desert.

OCTOBER EIGHTEENTH

The learned eye is still the loving one.
Red Cotton Nightcap Country.

OCTOBER NINETEENTH

Faultless to a fault.
The Ring and the Book.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



OCTOBER TWENTIETH

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate—

That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another state,
Where it strives and gets weary, loses and
wins—

Where the strong and the weak, this world's
congeries,

Repeat in large what they practiced in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.

Old Pictures in Florence.

OCTOBER TWENTY-FIRST

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?

Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made
with hands!

Abt Vogler.

OCTOBER TWENTY-SECOND

And men have oft grown old among their books
To die case-hardened in their ignorance,
Whose careless youth had promised what long
years
Of unremitted labor ne'er performed.

Paracelsus.

FROM DAY TO DAY



OCTOBER TWENTY-THIRD

Men could not part us with their worldly jars,
Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend;
Our hands would touch for all the mountain-
bars:

And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,
We should but vow the faster for the stars.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

OCTOBER TWENTY-FOURTH

Before the point was mooted "What is God?"
No savage man inquired "What am myself?"
Much less replied, "First, last, and best of
things."

A Death in the Desert.

OCTOBER TWENTY-FIFTH

Chance cannot change my love, nor time impair.
Any Wife to Any Husband.

OCTOBER TWENTY-SIXTH

A Man!—a right true man, however,
Whose work was worthy a man's endeavor.
Christmas Eve.

WITH THE BROWNING'S

OCTOBER TWENTY-SEVENTH

In this world, who can do a thing, will not—
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the
power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

Andrea del Sarto.

OCTOBER TWENTY-EIGHTH

What matter though I doubt at every pore,
Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at fingers'
ends,

Doubts in the trivial work of every day,
Doubts at the very bases of my soul
In the grand moments when she probes herself—
If finally I have a life to show?

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

OCTOBER TWENTY-NINTH

For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory past,
I lay my spirit down at last.

Johannes Agricola in Meditation.

FROM DAY TO DAY



OCTOBER THIRTIETH

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away!
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,
Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,
An life be a proof of this!—*By the Fireside.*

OCTOBER THIRTY-FIRST

Oh, wilt thou have my hand, dear, to lie along
in thine?
As a little stone in a running stream, it seems
to lie and pine.
Now drop the poor pale hand, dear, unfit to
plight with thine.

Oh, wilt thou have my cheek, dear, drawn closer
to thine own?
My cheek is white, my cheek is worn, by many
a tear run down.
Now leave a little space, dear, lest it should
wet thine own.

Oh, must thou have my soul, dear, commingled
with thy soul?—
Red grows the cheek, and warm the hand; the
part is in the whole:
Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate, when soul
is joined to soul. —*Inclusions.*

WITH THE BROWNINGS



NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER FIRST

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
This autumn morning! How he sets his
bones

To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and
feet

For the ripple to run over in its mirth;

Listening the while, where on the heap of
stones

The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;

Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and
knows.

If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you:

Make the low nature better by your throes!
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above!

Among the Rocks.

NOVEMBER SECOND

Our best is bad, nor bears Thy test;
Still, it should be our very best.

Christmas Eve.

FROM DAY TO DAY



NOVEMBER THIRD

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

NOVEMBER FOURTH

I would have but one
Delight on earth, so it were wholly mine;
One rapture all my soul could fill.

Pauline.

NOVEMBER FIFTH

My business is not to remake myself,
But make the absolute best of what God made.

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

NOVEMBER SIXTH

So you saw yourself as you wished you were,
As you might have been, as you cannot be;
And bringing your own shortcomings there,
You grew content in your poor degree.

Andrea del Sarto.

WITH THE BROWINGS



NOVEMBER SEVENTH

'Tis not what man Does which exalts him, but
what man Would do.

Saul.

NOVEMBER EIGHTH

The truth itself,
That's neither man's nor woman's, but just
God's;

None else has reason to be proud of truth:
Himself will see it sifted, disenthralled,
And kept upon the height, and in the light,
As far as, and no farther, than 'tis truth.

Aurora Leigh.

NOVEMBER NINTH

God's gift was that man should conceive of
truth

And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,
As midway help till he reach fact indeed—
Yet all the while goes changing what was
wrought

From falsehood like the truth, to truth itself.

A Death in the Desert.

NOVEMBER TENTH

On earth I confess an itch for the praise of
fools—that's Vanity.—*Solomon and Balkis.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



NOVEMBER ELEVENTH

The lowest, on true grounds,
Is worth more than the highest rule, on false:
Aspire to rule, on the true grounds.

Colombe's Birthday.

NOVEMBER TWELFTH

That such a cloud should break, such trouble
be,
Ere a man settle, soul and body, down
Into his true place and take rest forever.

Luria.

NOVEMBER THIRTEENTH

You must have been most miserable
To be so cruel.

Aurora Leigh.

NOVEMBER FOURTEENTH

Let the world's sharpness, like a clasping knife,
Shut in upon itself and do no harm
In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm,
And let us hear no sound of human strife
After the click of the shutting. Life to life—
I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,
And feel as safe as guarded by a charm
Against the stab of worldlings.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

WITH THE BROWINGS



NOVEMBER FIFTEENTH

Fast this life of mine was dying,
Blind already and calm as death,
Snowflakes on her bosom lying
Scarcely heaving with her breath.

Love came by, and having known her
In a dream of fabled lands,
Gently stooped, and laid upon her
Mystic chrism of holy hands;

Drew his smile across her folded
Eyelids, as the swallow dips;
Breathed as finely as the cold did
Through the locking of her lips.

So, when Life looked upward, being
Warmed and breathed on from above,
What sight could she have for seeing,
Evermore . . . but only Love?
Life and Love.

NOVEMBER SIXTEENTH

The Hate of all Hates, or the Love
Of all Loves, in its Valley or Grove,
I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
Pippa Passes.

FROM DAY TO DAY



NOVEMBER SEVENTEENTH

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

NOVEMBER EIGHTEENTH

For what are the voices of birds,
Aye, and of beasts—but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?

Pippa Passes.

NOVEMBER NINETEENTH

Trust me,
If there be friends who seek to work our hurt,
To ruin and drag down earth's mightiest spirits
Even at God's foot, 'twill be from such as love
Their zeal will gather most to serve their cause;
And least from those who hate.

Paracelsus.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



NOVEMBER TWENTIETH

The sun was high
When first I felt my pulses set themselves
For concords; when the rhythmic turbulence
Of blood and brain swept outward upon words,
As wind upon the alders, blanching them
By turning up their under-natures till
They trembled in dilation. Oh, delight
And triumph of the poet,—who would say
A man's mere "yes," a woman's common "no,"
A little human hope of that or this,
And says the word so that it burns you through
With a special revelation, shakes the heart
Of all the men and women in the world,
As if one came back from the dead and spoke,
With eyes too happy, a familiar thing
Become divine i' the utterance! while for him
The poet, the speaker, he expands with joy;
The palpitating angel in his flesh
Thrills inly with consenting fellowship
To those innumerable spirits who sun themselves
Outside of time. —*Aurora Leigh*.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FIRST

From the beginning Love is whole
And true; if sure of naught beside, most sure
Of its own truth at least. —*Sordello*.

FROM DAY TO DAY



NOVEMBER TWENTY-SECOND

I think of thee!—my thoughts do twine and bud
About thee, as wild vines, about a tree,
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's naught
to see
Except the straggling green which hides the
wood.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-THIRD

I, tempt a woman, to amuse a man,
That two may mock her heart if it succumb?
No! fearing God and standing 'neath His
heaven,
I would not dare insult a woman so,
Were she the meanest woman in the world,
And he, I cared to please, ten emperors!

In a Balcony.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH

But I have always had one lode-star; now
As I look back, I see that I have wasted,
Or progressed as I have looked toward that
star—

A need, a trust, a yearning after God,
A feeling I have analyzed but late,
But it existed.

—*Pauline.*

WITH THE BROWNING'S



NOVEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH

Oh, not alone when life flows still, do truth
And power emerge, but also when strange
chance

Ruffles its current; in unused conjuncture,
When sickness breaks the body—hunger, watch-
ing,

Excess or languor—oftenest death's approach,
Peril, deep joy or woe. —*Paracelsus.*

NOVEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH

If such as came for wool, sir, went home shorn,
Where is the wrong I did them?

Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."

NOVEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH

Yes, call me by my pet-name! let me hear
The name I used to run at, when a child,
From innocent play, and leave the cowslips
piled,

To glance up in some face that proved me dear
With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear
Fond voices which, being drawn and reconciled
Into the music of Heaven's undefiled,
Call me no longer.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

FROM DAY TO DAY



NOVEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH

Then thou didst come—to be,
Belovéd, what they seemed. Their shining
fronts,
Their songs, their splendors (better, yet the
same,
As river-water hallowed into fonts),
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame
My soul with satisfaction of all wants:
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to
shame.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-NINTH

Work I may dispense
With talk about, since work in evidence,
Perhaps in history; who knows or cares?
A Forgiveness.

NOVEMBER THIRTIETH

How well I know what I mean to do
When the long dark Autumn evenings come;
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue?
With the music of all thy voices, dumb
In life's November too!

By the Fireside.



DECEMBER

DECEMBER FIRST

Which is the weakest thing of all

Mine heart can ponder?

The sun, a little cloud can pall

With darkness yonder?

The cloud, a little wind can move

Where'er it listeth?

The wind, a little leaf above,

Though sere, resisteth?

What time that yellow leaf was green,

My days were gladder;

But now, whatever spring may mean,

I must grow sadder.

Ah me! a leaf with sighs can wring

My lips asunder?

Then is mine heart the weakest thing

Itself can ponder.

Yet, Heart, when sun and cloud are pined

And drop together,

And at a blast which is not wind

The forests wither,

Thou, from the darkening deathly curse

To glory breakest,—

The Strongest of the universe

Guarding the weakest.—*The Weakest Thing.*

FROM DAY TO DAY



DECEMBER SECOND

What's Time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever.

A Grammarian's Funeral.

DECEMBER THIRD

A heavy heart, Belovéd, have I borne
From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

DECEMBER FOURTH

Needs there groan a world in anguish just to
teach us sympathy.—*Two Poets of Croisic.*

DECEMBER FIFTH

There is no truer truth obtainable
By man, than comes of music.

Charles Avison.

DECEMBER SIXTH

Truth never hurts the teller

Fifine at the Fair.

WITH THE BROWNINGS



DECEMBER SEVENTH

Belovéd, dost thou love? or did I see all
The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when
Too vehement light dilated my ideal,
For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again,
As now these tears come—falling hot and real?

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

DECEMBER EIGHTH

So I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man . . .
When sudden, how think ye, the end . . .
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts and prayed!
So I was afraid! —*Instans Tyrannus.*

DECEMBER NINTH

Thus it is with me;
Souls alter not, and mine must progress still.
And this I knew not when I flung away
My youth's chief aims. I ne'er supposed the
loss

Of what few I retained; for no resource
Awaits me—now behold the change of all!

Pauline.

FROM DAY TO DAY



DECEMBER TENTH

An' strange it is, that I who could so dream,
Should e'er have stooped to aim at aught be-
neath—

Aught low, or painful. —*Pauline.*

DECEMBER ELEVENTH

And dost thou lift this house's latch, too poor
For hand of thine? and canst thou think and
bear

To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fulness at my door?

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

DECEMBER TWELFTH

Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And life is perfected in death.

Vision of Poets.

DECEMBER THIRTEENTH

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

Andrea del Sarto.

DECEMBER FOURTEENTH

Love like mine must have return.

A Soul's Tragedy.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



DECEMBER FIFTEENTH

Youth once gone is gone:
Deeds, let escape, are never to be done.
Sordello.

DECEMBER SIXTEENTH

Well, when the eve has its last streak
The night has its first star! —*Strafford.*

DECEMBER SEVENTEENTH

Do I task my faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more
and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
souls and the clod. —*Saul.*

DECEMBER EIGHTEENTH

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts,
With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks
to all
Who paused a little near the prison-wall
To hear my music in its louder parts
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.
Sonnets from the Portuguese.

FROM DAY TO DAY



DECEMBER NINETEENTH

God help all poor souls lost in the dark.
The Heretic's Tragedy.

DECEMBER TWENTIETH

Because, however sad the truth may seem,
Sludge is of all-importance to himself.
Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."

DECEMBER TWENTY-FIRST

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee,
art
A guest for queens to social pageantries,
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy
part
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing
through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the
dew,—
And Death must dig the level where these
agree.—*Sonnets from the Portuguese.*

WITH THE BROWNING'S



DECEMBER TWENTY-SECOND

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? " Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest.

Sonnets from the Portuguese.

DECEMBER TWENTY-THIRD

This world has been harsh and strange;
Something is wrong: there needeth a change.

Holy-Cross Day.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH

It were to be wished that the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessel, holding treasure,
But the main thing is, does it hold good
measure?

Heaven soon sets right all other matters.

Christmas Eve.

FROM DAY TO DAY



DECEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH

It's wiser being good than bad ;
It's safer being meek than fierce :
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched ;
That what began best, can't end worst
Nor what God blessed once, prove accursed.
Apparent Failure.

DECEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think,
imprisoned—
Low he lies who once you loved so, whom you
loved so,
—Pity me?
Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken !
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the un-
manly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

Epilogue.

WITH THE BROWNING'S



DECEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH

One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,

Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-
time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!

Bid him forward, breast and back as either
should be,

"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare
ever

There as here!" —*Epilogue.*

DECEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH

Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that
burns!

Earth's returns

For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!

Shut them in,

With their triumphs and their glories and the
rest!

Love is best.

Love Among the Ruins.

FROM DAY TO DAY



DECEMBER TWENTY-NINTH

Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows Heaven with its new day.

Christmas Eve.

DECEMBER THIRTIETH

So, the year's done with!
(Love me forever!)
All March begun with,
April's endeavor;
May-wreaths that bound me
June needs must sever;
Now snows fall round me,
Quenching June's fever—
(Love me forever!)

Love.

DECEMBER THIRTY-FIRST

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
form,
Yet the strong man must go:

WITH THE BROWNING'S

For the journey is done and the summit attained,

And the barriers fall,

Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,

The reward of it all.

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,

The best and the last!

I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forebore,

And bade me creep past.

No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers

The heroes of old,

Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears

Of pain, darkness, and cold.

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,

The black minute's at end,

And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,

Shall dwindle, shall blend,

Shall change, shall become a peace out of pain,

Then a light, then thy breast,

O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,

And with God be the rest! —*Prospice.*

